

countdown

WEEK ENDING
MARCH 6, 1971

Nov. **3**
FIVE PENCE

**DR.
WHO**

SEE PAGE 13

COMPLETE STINGRAY
STORY INSIDE!



4

FREE Stamps
for your wallchart



ED STRAKER HUNTS A
CRASHED UFO—PAGE 7



The Eastern Block have developed a similar system to Professor McClaine's BIG RAT computer. Now they have begun their programme of master-minded missions against the West. British Army Security, London...



Josef Nineski JOE 90

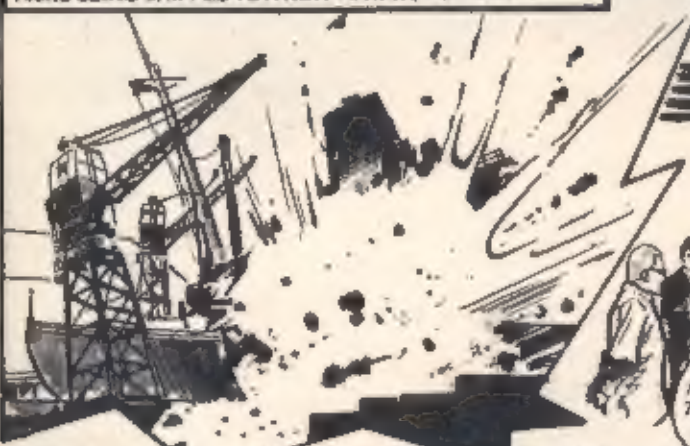
ART:
JON DAVIS

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TOP SECRET U.S.A.F.
BASE OMAHA...

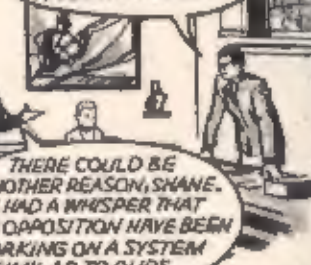


ANTWERP DOCKS...A SECRET CONSIGNMENT OF DEFENSIVE ARMS BEING SHIPPED TO A NEW AFRICAN STATE...



WIN H.Q., LONDON...

THERE COULD BE ANOTHER REASON, SHANE. I'VE HAD A WHISPER THAT THE OPPOSITION HAVE BEEN WORKING ON A SYSTEM SIMILAR TO OURS.



YOU MEAN THEY'VE LEARNT THE SECRET OF THE BIG RAT?

THEN, IT'S GOT TO BE DISCREDITED, SAM. HOW ELSE ARE WE TO MAINTAIN OUR ADVANTAGE?

THAT'S HOW IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK, PROFESSOR.



IT TAKES EXACTLY TWO DAYS FOR W.I.N. TO FORMULATE A COUNTER-PLAN. AND IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING THE CRACKLE OF GUNSHOTS DISTURB A WEST END CUL-DE-SAC.



THE LONE FIGURE OF SAM LOOVER STAGGERS UP THE EMBASSY STEPS UNDER A HAIL OF BULLETS...



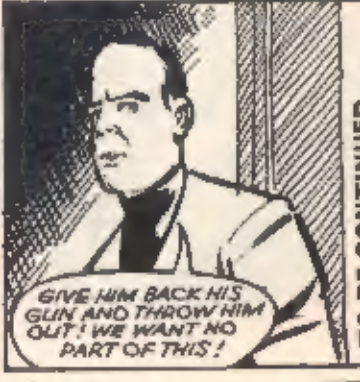
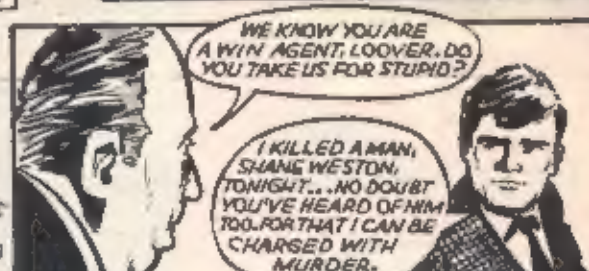
I'VE BEEN HIT... FOR PETE'S SAKE HELP ME IN... FAST!



THE CALM ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS IDENTITY, SENDS THE EMBASSY INTO UPROAR...

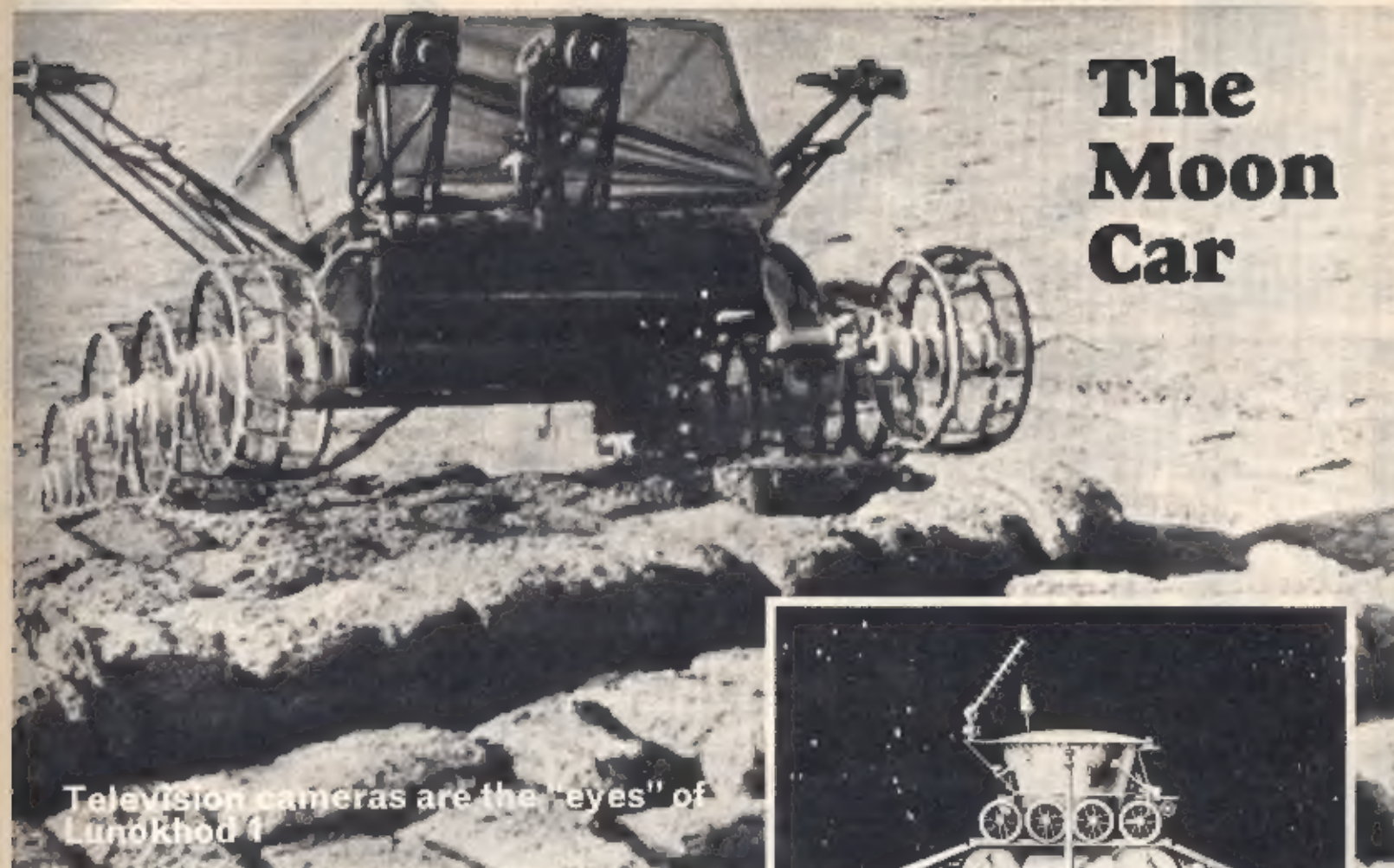


I'M SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM, MR. AMBASSADOR.



TO BE CONTINUED...

The Moon Car



Television cameras are the "eyes" of Lunokhod 1

THE trail-blazing Lunokhod 1 became the first lunar roving vehicle following the successful soft landing of Luna 17 on the moon on November 17, 1970.

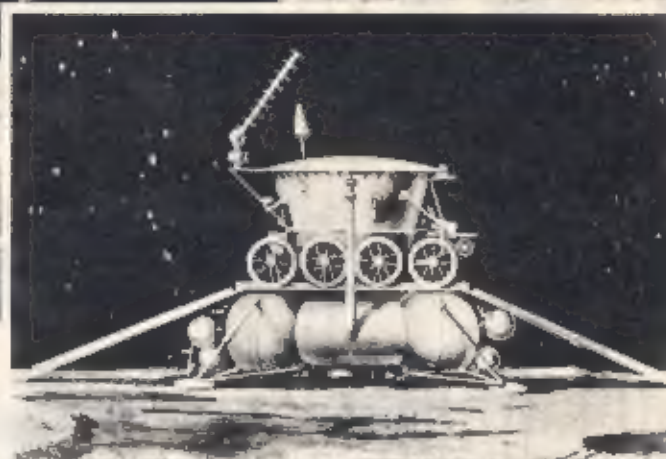
The picture above shows Lunokhod during ground trials over simulated lunar terrain. The inset photo is an artist's drawing of the eight-wheeled vehicle as it prepares to roll down the ramp and off the Luna 17 landing craft.

Lunokhod is driven by remote control by a team of operators on Earth. The driver watches the surface ahead through television cameras mounted on the vehicle and can order it to go

forward, backward, or make turns. Each of the eight spoked wheels has its own electric motor.

A hatch on top of Lunokhod opens on command to expose a panel of solar cells to sunlight. These charge a storage battery which in turn provides the power to turn the wheels and operate the instruments.

The moon rover carries an X-ray telescope, a laser reflector and devices to analyse the soil. By January 18 Lunokhod had made a complete round trip of 2.2 miles and returned to the Luna 17 landing craft through craters up to 80 feet across.



March 6th, 1971
Issue 3

countdown

Polystyle Publications
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● On the cover

Jon Pertwee plays the title role in the popular television series *Dr. Who*.

The Doctor has been running on the BBC since 1963 and he returned last January with a new girl co-star. Katy Manning plays the part of Jo Grant, a secret agent from UNIT. Nick Courtney appears as the Brigadier and Roger Delgado is *Dr. Who*'s opponent, The Master.

The series can be seen Saturdays at 5.15 on BBC1.



CONTENTS



IF A MYSTERON THREAT TO KILL THE PRESIDENT OF ORAFI SUCCEEDS, BIG TROUBLE WILL FLARE UP IN THE NORTH AFRICAN OIL STATE, ENDANGERING WORLD PEACE. CUNNINGLY, THE MYSTERONS STRIKE THROUGH A POLICE GUARD, AND THE ORAFI PRESIDENT FLEES IN TERROR FROM A MIDNIGHT ATTACK!



THERE IS NO ESCAPE! YOU CANNOT DEFEY THE WILLOF THE MYSTERONS.



ONE PISH... AND ALL WILL BE OVER!

NO! NO!



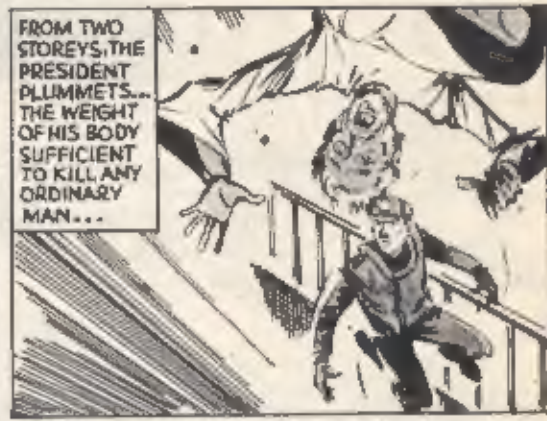
SCARLET! UP THERE!

THE ORAFI PRESIDENT!

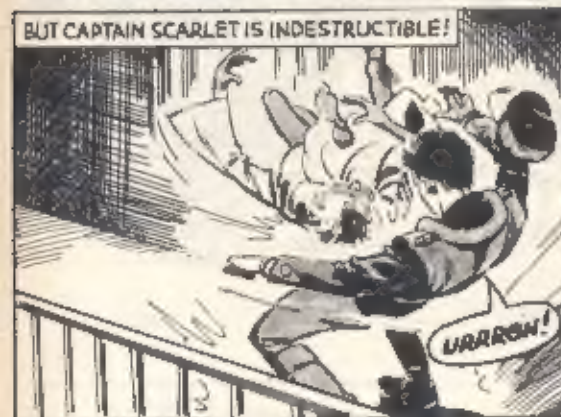


IN THE NAME OF MYSTERON'S... DIE!

YEEEAH!



FROM TWO STOREYS, THE PRESIDENT PLUMMETS... THE WEIGHT OF HIS BODY SUFFICIENT TO KILL ANY ORDINARY MAN...



BUT CAPTAIN SCARLET IS INDESTRUCTIBLE!

URRRROW!



SCARLET, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



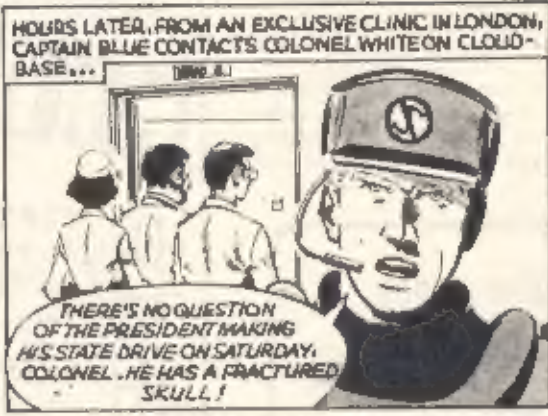
BLUE MAKES A SWIFT EXAMINATION...

BAD FRACTURES... MAYBE CONCUSSION. BUT THEY'RE BOTH ALIVE!



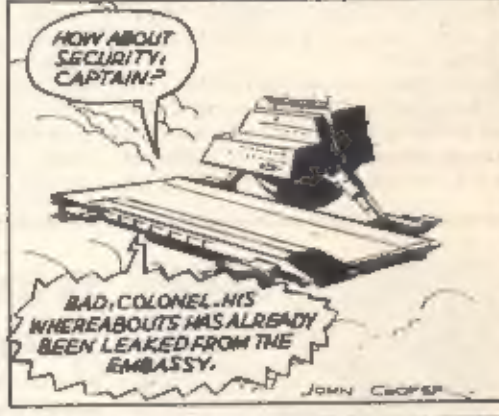
THEN THE ORAFI EMBASSY COMES TO LIFE!

WHEN THAT MYSTERON AGENT DISCOVERS HE'S FAILED HE'S BOUND TO TRY AGAIN. I'LL HAVE TO FIX TIGHT SECURITY ON THE HOSPITAL.



HOURS LATER, FROM AN EXCLUSIVE CLINIC IN LONDON, CAPTAIN BLUE CONTACTS COLONEL WHITE ON CLOUD-BASE...

THERE'S NO QUESTION OF THE PRESIDENT MAKING HIS STATE DRIVE ON SATURDAY, COLONEL... HE HAS A FRACTURED SKULL!



HOW ABOUT SECURITY, CAPTAIN?

BAD, COLONEL... HIS WHEREABOUTS HAS ALREADY BEEN LEAKED FROM THE EMBASSY.

JOHN COOPER



IF SCARLET FOLLOWS HIS USUAL PATTERN HE SHOULD MEND WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. UNTIL THEN, BLUE DON'T LEAVE THE PRESIDENT'S SIDE.



WHAT'S THE NEWS ON THE PRESIDENT'S SISTER?

DOCTOR WATERSON HAS CALLED A SPECIALIST. WE'RE TAKING EXTENSIVE X-RAYS IN PREPARATION...



FOLLOWING HIS ORDERS, BLUE GOES WITH THE PRESIDENT TO THE X-RAY UNIT. AND AFTER...

WE MAY HAVE TO MOVE THE PRESIDENT TO THE WALKER SANATORIUM IN SUSSEX. THE ONLY PLACE WITH THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT...



AND ALL THE TIME, THE MYSTERONS WILL BE WATCHING... WAITING FOR ANOTHER CHANCE!

IMAGINE yourself taking a simulated space flight. You're standing in front of a part-task trainer which consists of a spacecraft cabin fitted with a three-axis control, an instructor's console, a bank of computers, and a visual display that reproduces the earth as seen from space.

Climb into the cabin and sink back in the astronaut's reclining chair. Feel a bit hemmed in? That array of control panels, with hundreds of dials, switches and warning lights, seems uncomfortably close to your face. Never mind, you'll soon get used to it. Let your hands fall naturally to each side. On the left is the abort handle or "chicken switch". It fires the escape tower to hurl your spacecraft clear if anything goes wrong on the launch pad. On the right is the three-axis control (pitch, yaw and roll) which will stabilise and orient your craft in outer space.

Your trainer-capsule is poised on a steel ball and cushioned by a layer of compressed air. The slightest movement you make will tilt it over or send it spinning round.

The three-axis control operates compressed-air jets that will turn your craft in any direction. Push the control bar forward and the capsule will pitch (nod up and down). Twist the control and you'll yaw (swing from side to side). Move it left or right and you'll turn over in a slow roll.

Careful with those compressed-air jets. Use them in short

So you want to be an Astronaut?



second.

Now it's time for re-entry—fire your rockets. Press the button on your left and brace yourself for the shock. As the retros fire you feel as if some powerful force is pushing you right through your seat. That was only 8g. During re-entry you'll have to stand up to 16g.

Gradually the pressures and the shaking and the shuddering will stop. Signal to the instructor and he'll switch off the power. You've made a good start.

Next week: practice a rendezvous in space with the docking trainer.

Left: An astronaut endures the pre-flight ritual of attaching body sensors. Electrodes are taped to the skin to detect pulse and breathing rates, etc. This information is telemetered to the ground to allow doctors in Mission Control to monitor the heart beat of an astronaut thousands of miles away.

Right: A space suit undergoes pressurisation tests to ensure it is completely air-tight. The visor is coated with gold to protect the eyes from the harsh light and heat from the sun. Below: Astronaut Michael Collins checks one of the 800 controls and displays in the Apollo Command Module.



bursts only, or you'll spin out of control. Try to grasp the meaning of all those coloured lights on the control panel. But keep a wary eye on the earth as well. You do this by fleeting glances through a window, much the same as a driver does when he glances into his rear view mirror. What you really see is a revolving map, but it looks as if the world is rushing by at five miles a



Countdown

Is the starship Countdown doomed? While entering the solar system after a fifty-year journey to the star system Tau Ceti, 11 light-years away, a signal missile sent from the moon warns them of impending destruction from the new Earth administration. The Controller, William Costra, leader of the sinister "Company", has launched wave after wave of nuclear missiles toward the returning craft. Helplessly, Lunar Controller Bellingham, now under arrest, watches the heralds of death speed into space...

YOU POOR, INSIGNIFICANT FOOL... DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD DEFY THE WILL OF COSTRA, THE EARTH CONTROLLER?

THIS TIME YOU HAVE WON, COSTRA. BUT IN YOUR HANDS THE WORLD MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD!

WHAT HAPPENS HERE ON EARTH OR EVEN ON THE MOON NO LONGER CONCERNS YOU, BELLINGHAM. YOUR PROBLEM NOW IS SURVIVAL. TAKE HIM AWAY!

BUT UNBEKNOWN TO THE ARROGANT COSTRA, THE CREW OF COUNTDOWN DO NOT SLEEP INNOCENTLY...

HERE THEY COME, COMMANDER.

SO THE SIGNAL ROCKET WAS NO HOAX.

I FEAR NOT, COMMANDER. WHAT STRANGE CREATURES YOU EARTHLINGS MUST BE TO DESTROY EACH OTHER.

PLEASE DON'T JUDGE US ALL BY THIS ACT OF MADNESS, BILL. THROUGH OUR HISTORY EVIL ROGUES HAVE BEEN RAISED TO CREATE FEAR AND OPPRESSION BUT ALWAYS THEY HAVE BEEN DEFEATED IN THE END.

WELL, LET'S GET WORKING. HOW LONG HAVE WE GOT?

AT THE MOST FIFTEEN HOURS.

MOVING DEVICES WERE ALMOST PERFECT WHEN WE LEFT EARTH. THEY'RE BOUND TO BE ALMOST UNBEATABLE NOW.

EACH MISSILE PROGRAMMED FOR OUR DESTRUCTION.

IT SEEMS WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHANCE, DO WE?

BE REALISTIC! HOW CAN WE ESCAPE THAT LOT?

WE COULD MAKE A RUN FOR IT!

DON'T BE ABSURD, AS NON-MANNED VEHICLES THEIR ACCELERATION IS GREATER THAN OURS.

THEN WE ARE DOOMED.



THE COUNTDOWN
COMMANDER
HAS HEARD
ENOUGH...

SILENCE! I HAVE
EVERY INTENTION OF
SURVIVING WITH OR
WITHOUT YOU ALL, SO
LET'S GET DOWN TO SOME
WORK, SHALL WE? THAT
INCLUDES YOU, BILL.

LONG HOURS PASS AND
THEORY AFTER THEORY
IS FED THROUGH THE
COMPUTERS WITH
FRUSTRATINGLY
NEGATIVE RESULTS.



THAT'S NOT
GOING TO WORK
EITHER. IT'S
HOPELESS.

I THINK I'VE
GOT SOMETHING,
COMMANDER.



THE REQUEST COMES FROM FELIX
FOUR, ASTRAL NAVIGATOR.

WHAT IS IT,
FELIX?

WELL, SIR, I HAVE
AN IDEA... IT'S SORT
OF AWKWARD BECAUSE
IT'S GOING TO SOUND
A BIT PRIMITIVE.



LET ME BE THE JUDGE OF THAT,
FELIX. AT PRESENT WE DON'T SEEM
TO BE HAVING MANY IDEAS.
SHOOT.

HAVE YOU
NOTICED OUR
PROXIMITY TO
THE ASTEROID
BELT?

I DON'T
SEE THE USE
OF THIS
KNOWLEDGE,
FELIX.



WITH QUITE
A SMALL COURSE
CORRECTION WE
COULD BE AMONGST
THEM BEFORE THE
MISSILES ARRIVE
AND...

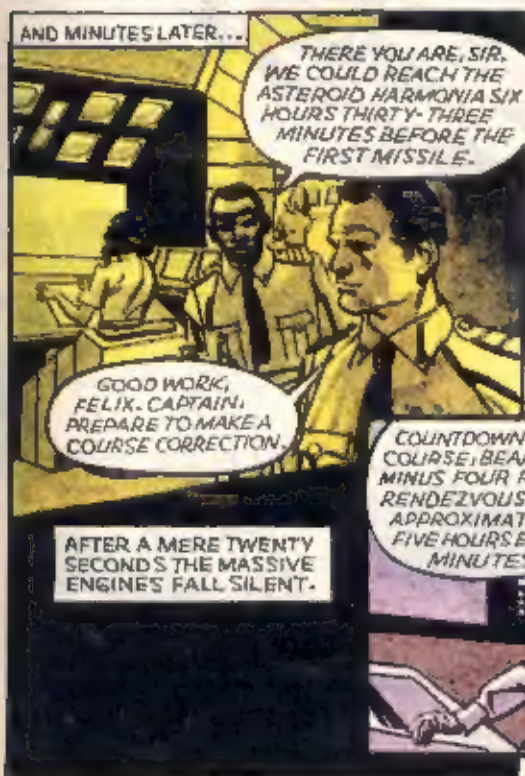
WE CAN HARDLY
HIDE BEHIND AN
ASTEROID.



NO, COMMANDER,
BUT SUPPOSE WE
COULD PUT COUNTDOWN
IN TWO PLACES
AT ONCE.

OF COURSE!
A TRANS-
DIMENSIONAL
IMAGE!

I'M LOST.
ELABORATE,
YOU TWO.



AND MINUTES LATER...

THERE YOU ARE, SIR.
WE COULD REACH THE
ASTEROID HARMONIA SIX
HOURS THIRTY-THREE
MINUTES BEFORE THE
FIRST MISSILE.

GOOD WORK,
FELIX. CAPTAIN.
PREPARE TO MAKE A
COURSE CORRECTION.

AFTER A MERE TWENTY
SECONDS THE MASSIVE
ENGINE'S FALL SILENT.



COUNTDOWN ON NEW
COURSE, BEARING ZERO,
MINUS FOUR FIVE,
RENDEZVOUS IN
APPROXIMATELY
FIVE HOURS ELEVEN
MINUTES.

THANK YOU,
CAPTAIN.



AND...



THAT GIVES US
EXACTLY ELEVEN HOURS,
FORTY-THREE MINUTES
TO PUT THIS IMPOSSIBLE
SCHEME INTO OPERATION.

STINGRAY

● ART: MICHAEL STRAND

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THE PACIFIC COAST OF AMERICA...
A MONSTROUS WAVE OVER
SEVENTY FEET HIGH SMASHES
THE DEFENCELESS COAST.



THE FOLLOWING MORNING
A WASP HELIJET FLIES
OVER THE AREA TO
ASSESS THE DAMAGE...



LOOKS BAD,
COMMANDER.

ONE THING'S
FOR CERTAIN,
CAPTAIN, THE
MARINEVILLE
INSTALLATIONS
COULDN'T TAKE
ANOTHER BATTERING
LIKE THAT.

THAT UNDERWATER
EARTH TREMOR SURE
CAUGHT US NAPPING.
I HOPE STINGRAY COMES
UP WITH SOME ANSWERS.



SOME SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY MILES OFF THE CALIFORNIAN COAST,
STINGRAY INSPECTS THE STILL MURKY OCEAN FLOOR...



BOY, THIS
PLACE TOOK SOME
BELTING RECENTLY.

YEAH, NOT A FISH IN
SIGHT... LET'S GET THOSE
SEISMOGRAPHIC REPORTS
AND GET BACK TO
MARINEVILLE.

A FEW MINUTES
TICK BY, THEN...



BOY, LOOK AT
THAT CREVASSE.
THAT'S NOT ON
THE OLD CHARTS,
TROY.

MUST'VE
BEEN SOME
TREMOR TO
CREATE
THAT...

LATER THAT SAME DAY
STINGRAY'S CAPTAIN HANDS
OVER HIS REPORT...



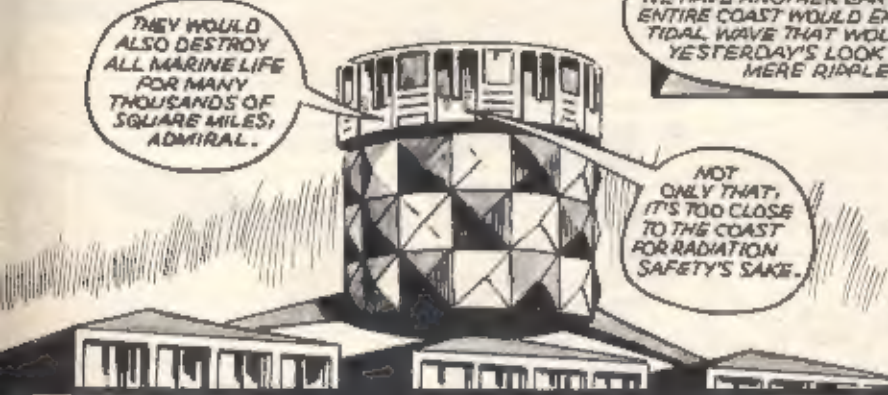
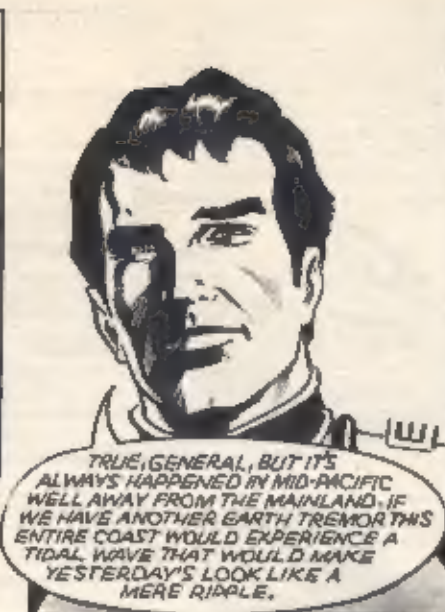
IF THIS
CONFIRMS MY
OTHER INFORMATION,
THINGS LOOK
PRETTY BLACK,
TROY.

THAT'S THE
UNDERSTATEMENT
OF THE DAY,
COMMANDER.

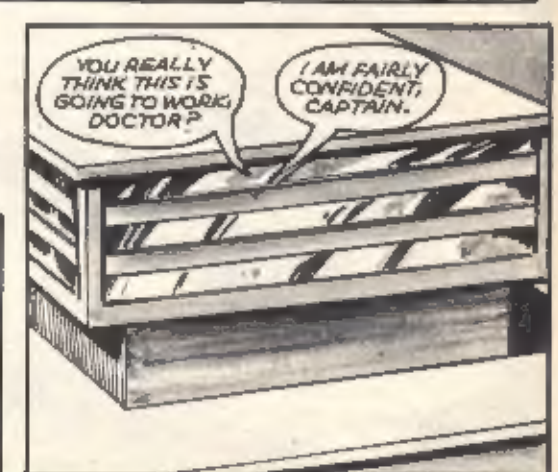
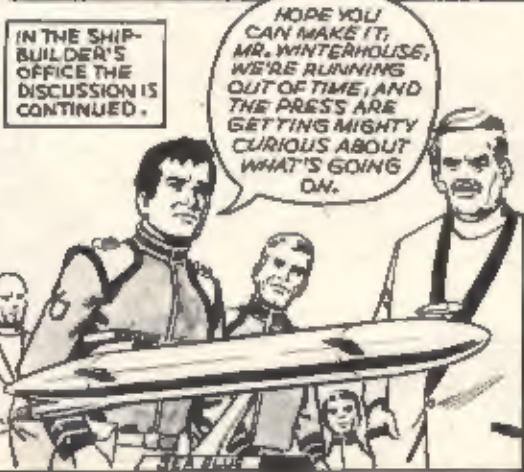
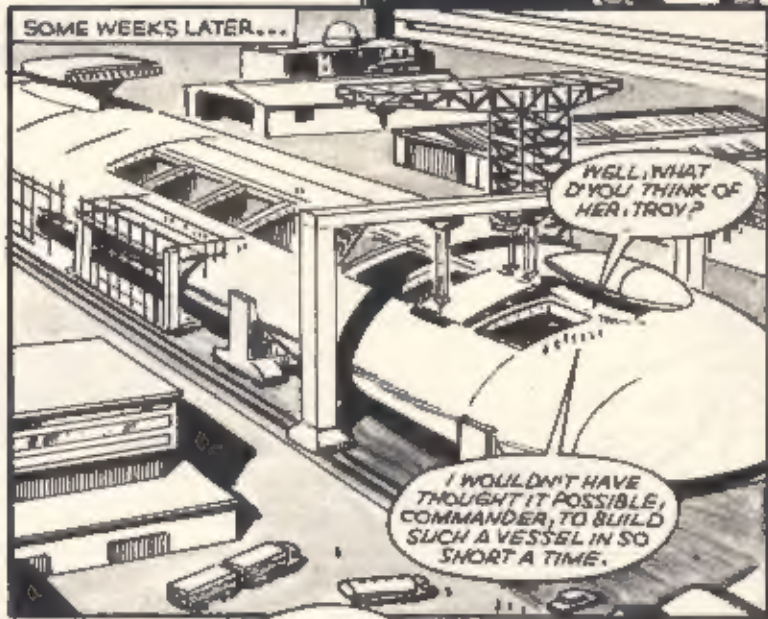
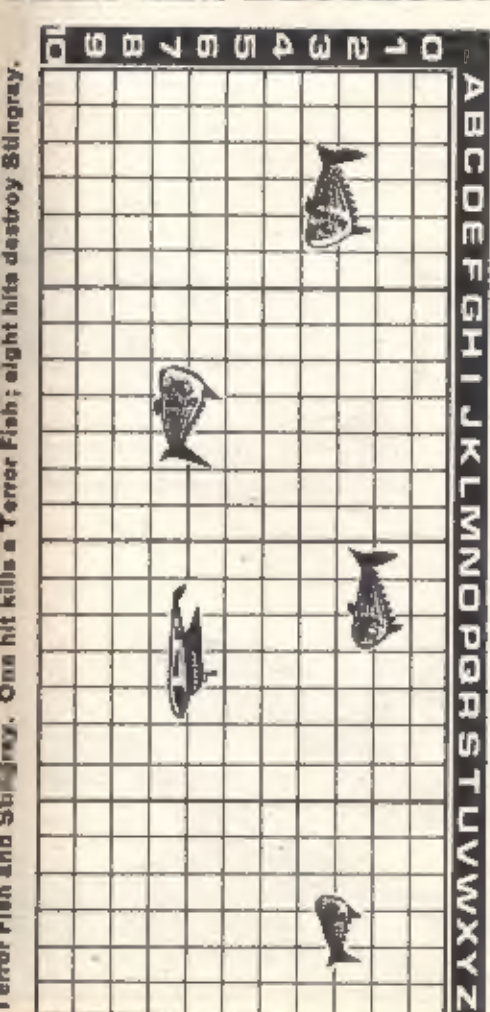
THE FOLLOWING MORNING A
HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE IS
HELD AT MARINEVILLE...



SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADD,
GENTLEMEN, I'LL LET CAPTAIN
TEMPEST GIVE US HIS
FINDINGS.



SEEK and DESTROY!





WHEN THE LIQUID SETTLES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TRENCH THE MUD WILL SET HARDER THAN IRON! GIVEN TIME IT WILL THEN SILT UP!

ON THE RETURN JOURNEY TO MARINEVILLE COMMANDER SHORE TELLS THE AQUANAUTS OF HIS OTHER WORRIES.

IF TITAN FINDS OUT THE TRUTH HE MIGHT THREATEN THE PROJECT, TROY. THAT'S WHY I AGREED THAT STINGRAY SHOULD BE USED AS PROTECTION VESSEL. IT SURE WOULD BE SOME OPPORTUNITY TO K.O. MARINEVILLE.

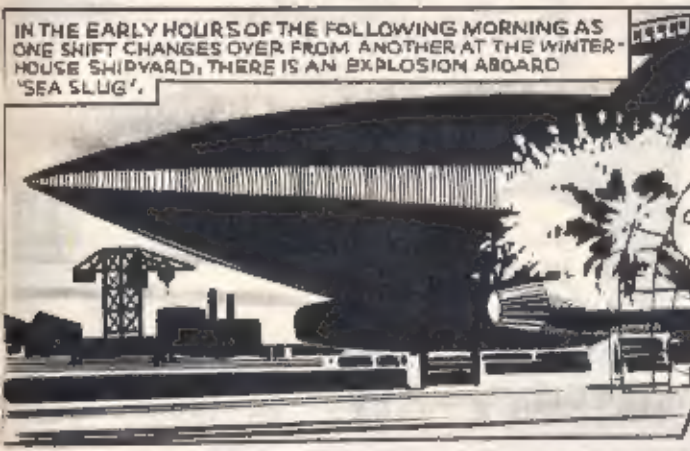
WHEN DO WE SAIL, COMMANDER?



IF THERE ARE NO HITCHES, BE ON STANDBY FRIDAY.

O.K. COMMANDER.

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE FOLLOWING MORNING AS ONE SHIFT CHANGES OVER FROM ANOTHER AT THE WINTERHOUSE SHIPYARD, THERE IS AN EXPLOSION ABOARD 'SEA SLUG'.



THE NEWS GOES QUICKLY TO MARINEVILLE AND SOON THE W.A.S.P. MEN ARE BACK AT THE WINTERHOUSE YARD.

IN HEAVEN'S NAME, WHY?

UNLESS PROVED OTHERWISE WE CAN ONLY DRAW ONE CONCLUSION, MR. WINTERHOUSE... THIS IS TITAN'S WORK.

AN HOUR LATER THE COMMANDER'S VIEW IS CONFIRMED...

IT WAS TITAN'S WORK ALL RIGHT, SIR. FRAGMENTS OF THAT WET EXPLOSIVE THEY USE EVERYWHERE.

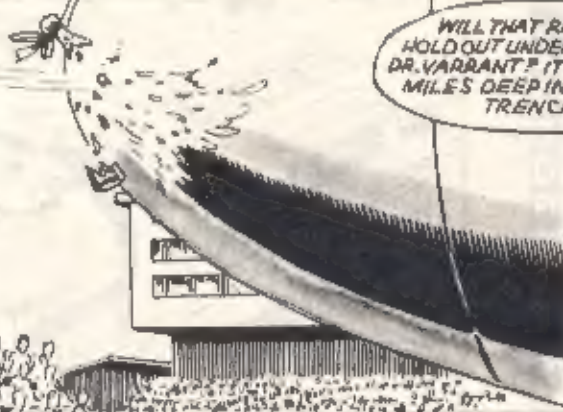
THAT'S JUST WHAT I NEEDED, THANKS SERGEANT.

FROM A NEARBY PLATFORM TROY WATCHES WITH THE DESIGNER, MERVYN VARRANT.

BUT TWO DAYS LATER THE IMPOSSIBLE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND MIRACULOUSLY THE 'SEA SLUG' ENTERS THE WATER ON TIME.



I NAME THIS SHIP 'SEA SLUG'.



WILL THAT REPAIR HOLD OUT UNDER PRESSURE, DR. VARRANT? IT'S TWELVE MILES DEEP IN THAT TRENCH.

I CAN ONLY HOPE SO, TROY. I'VE HAD A SPECIAL GADGET FITTED TO THE SEAL. IF IT SHOWS ANY SIGN OF COLLAPSING YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DETECT IT IN STINGRAY.



EARLY NEXT MORNING, 'SEA SLUG' IS FULLY LOADED AND READY FOR THE IMPORTANT MISSION FOR WHICH SHE HAS BEEN BUILT.



RENDEZVOUS OFF THE ISLAND OF LEMOY!

THE RENDEZVOUS IS MADE... BUT DOES NOT GO UNOBSERVED...

THE GIANT MOVES MAJESTY.

EXCELLENT, EVERYTHING IS READY.

AND SO THE COMPUTERISED GIANT SUBMERGES.



RATE POINT FIVE ZERO...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE year 1948 opened with incredible newspaper headlines. All across the United States, the papers carried stories like the Louisville Courier of January 7: "F-51 and Capt. Mantell Destroyed Chasing Flying Saucer." The story is now a classic in UFO history; in 1948 it made electrifying reading.

The scene is Godman Air Force Base, near Louisville, Kentucky. At 1.15 p.m. on January 7, the state police called Godman control tower to report that several people in Maysville, Kentucky (30 miles east of Louisville) had seen a strange aircraft.

At 1.35 the police called again. People in towns west of Louisville reported a strange circular craft "about 250 to 300 feet in diameter." The control tower operators checked on local aircraft movements: there were no flights in the area.

At 1.45 the two tower operators saw a UFO. They called in the base operations officer and the base intelligence officer. Using 8 x 60 binoculars none of the men could identify the object. Base commander Colonel Hix arrived in the control tower; he was at a loss for an explanation.

DISAGREEMENT

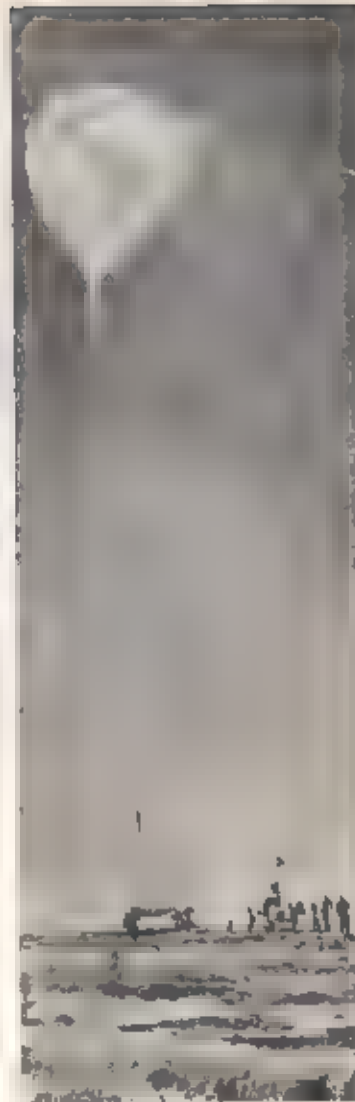
They couldn't agree on a description, calling the UFO "a parachute," "an ice cream cone tipped with red," "round and white," "huge and silver or metallic," "a small white object," or "one fourth the size of the full moon."

At 2.30 a flight of Air Force F-51's approached from the south. The flight leader, Captain Mantell, was instructed to go in for a close look at the UFO. Mantell and his two wing men were given a southerly heading by the tower—



the pilots could not see the UFO at this time—and the three aircraft disappeared from view.

As they climbed past 10,000 feet, the wing man later reported, Mantell was far ahead of them, barely visible. At 2.45 the flight leader called the tower: "I see something above and ahead of me and I'm still climbing." The tower asked for a description of what he saw. His reply, as best as can be remembered by the men in the tower, was "I've sighted the thing. It looks metallic and it's tremendous in size. Now it's starting to climb . . . I'm above me and I'm gaining on it. I'm going to 20,000 feet." As with their description of the object, the people in the tower couldn't agree on



Mantell's exact words but they all agreed he did say "I'm going to 20,000 feet."

NO REPLY

They were Captain Mantell's last words. None of the F-51's were equipped with oxygen and 15,000 feet was the maximum altitude a pilot could fly without blacking out. The two wing men levelled off at this height and to their repeated radio calls there was no answer. They returned to their base. One F-51 was refueled and searched the area again. He saw nothing.

At 3.50 the ground observers lost sight of the UFO. Shortly thereafter, they heard that Mantell had crashed.

The accident report said that the F-51 had lost a wing due to excessive speed in a dive after Mantell had blacked out due to a lack of oxygen.

Newspaper editors were frantic for explanations and the Air Force was ready. The planet Venus had been "chased" by an Air Force F-51 several weeks earlier under similar circumstances so that was the answer the editors received.

A BALLOON?

The newspapermen were convinced, until a year later when the official report on the Mantell incident retracted the Venus explanation. The planet was "too dim to be seen in the afternoon," so "it could have been a balloon." An astronomer Dr. J. A. van Hynek has pointed out, Venus appears as a pinpoint of light whereas the observers described an object with a visible size.

The U.S. Navy at this time was

DO FLYING SAUCERS EXIST?



Top right: A Stratoscope balloon carried a three-ton telescope to 77,000 feet in 1963 in order to observe the planet Mars from a position above 96 per cent of the earth's dust and water vapour. The small balloon on top, showing its four filling tubes, carried the 600-foot main balloon (uninflated) rapidly to the upper atmosphere where the lower air pressure allowed the helium to expand into the main balloon.

Above: The launching of a U.S. Air Force meteorological balloon, a type similar to the "skyhook" balloon, is shown in this 1954 photograph taken at Vernalis, California. The balloon is being inflated with hydrogen gas through a 90-foot-long tube.

secretly launching 100-foot diameter "skyhook" balloons as part of a highly-classified project. It is possible that such a balloon, drifting with the high-altitude winds near 60,000 feet, could have given the impression of a large metallic object—Mantell would never have seen such a huge balloon before.

So far, no one has found any records of a skyhook balloon being launched on January 7, 1948, although this is still the official explanation of the Mantell incident. The Condon Report, a study of UFO's commissioned by the U.S. Air Force, concludes, "This explanation, though plausible, is not a certain identification."

Once again, there are no final answers to this story, only questions. Would a giant high-altitude balloon, unfamiliar to Mantell, have fooled the experienced pilot into risking—and losing—his life by climbing above 15,000 feet without oxygen? Or was the UFO a circular craft, 300 feet in diameter, as described by people in nearby towns?

Next week: aliens on the moon?—the 1835 moon hoax.

In an attempt to defy the Time Lords and escape from earth in Tardis, Dr. Who finds himself in the Australian desert. There, he accidentally stumbles upon a mysterious and highly-secret international project. He is being interrogated by the Security Police...



WHO, INDEED? WE WANT YOUR REAL NAME AND HOW YOU GOT HERE.

THAT IS MY NAME AND IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE ME, THEN DON'T. I REFUSE TO ANSWER ANY MORE OF YOUR INFERNAL QUESTIONS.

WITH THIS SIMPLE STATEMENT THE DOCTOR SWITCHES OFF...

WAKE-UP, MAN. WHAT DIVOL THINK YOU'RE PLAYING AT?

IT'S NO USE, CHARLIE... HE'S IN SOME SORT OF SELF-INDUCED TRANCE. BETTER GET THE MEDICS HERE.

BUT BEFORE THE SECURITY MAN CAN OBEY HIS ORDERS, A SCREAMING SIREN ECHOES ITS ALARM THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND LABYRINTH.

THE FIRE ALARM!

COME ON, BOYS, YOU KNOW THE DRILL! WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE HIM!

NO SOONER DOES THE DOOR SLIDE SHUT BEHIND THEM, THAN...

HOW SINGULARLY CONVENIENT... BUT FIRST I HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS LITTLE CELL. THANK GOODNESS IT'S AN ELECTRONIC DOOR, THAT HELPS.

MEANWHILE SEVERAL HUNDRED YARDS AWAY IN THE COMPUTER ROOM OF THE COMPLEX, SEVERAL ASBESTOS-SUITED FIGURES ARE FIGHTING A WINNING BATTLE.



FIRE UNDER CONTROL, SIR.

WELL DONE.

AND IN THE NEARBY CONTROL ROOM...

A NEAR DISASTER AVERTED. ACCIDENTAL OR SABOTAGE? YOU, MY DEAR CAPTAIN WILL SOLVE THAT LITTLE MYSTERY. I WANT YOUR REPORT IN AN HOUR.

YES SIR, BUT I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT ONE OF MY MEN SAW PROFESSOR STEVENS LEAVE THE COMPUTER ROOM JUST BEFORE THE FIRE BROKE OUT.

MEANWHILE DR. WHO HAS SOLVED THE INTRICACIES OF THE ELECTRONIC DOOR.



QUITE A PRIMITIVE MECHANISM... NOT REALLY VERY DEMANDING... ANY GUARDS?

SLIGHTLY SURPRISED HIMSELF, THE TIME TRAVELLER FINDS THE CORRIDOR EMPTY AND WITH THE OCCASIONAL EVASIVE ACTION PROCEEDS GLIDE A DISTANCE BEFORE.



NOW WHAT HAVE WE HERE? THE MYSTERY THICKENS. WHY HIDE A MISSILE THAT SIZE UNLESS IT'S UP TO NO GOOD?

DR. WHO FOLLOWS HIS RESCUEE'S INSTRUCTIONS AND CLAMBERS INTO A NARROW DUCT...



CRAWL STRAIGHT AHEAD OF YOU, I'LL CATCH YOU UP!

BUT THEN...



THERE HE IS!

OH DEAR TROUBLE!



THERE HE GOES! AFTER HIM!

FIGHTING FOR BREATH THE DOCTOR ROUNDS YET ANOTHER CORNER ONLY TO HEAR THE PURSUING FOOTSTEPS ECHO EVER LOUDER.



IT'S NO USE... THEY'RE GAINING...

WHAT THE...

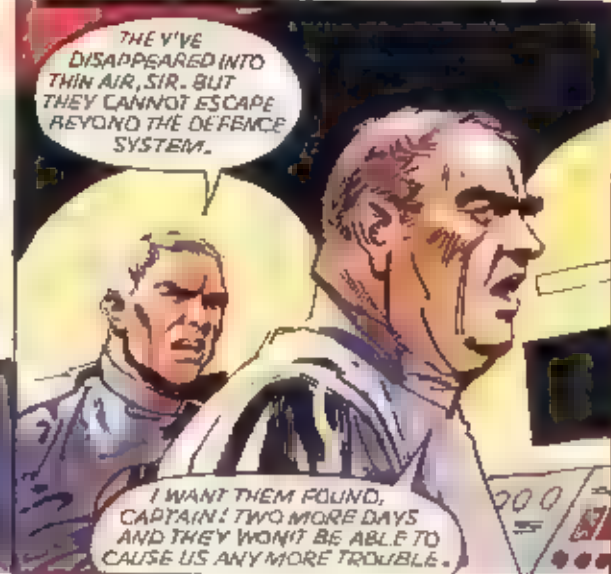


WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU?

DON'T ASK STUPID QUESTIONS! COME ON IF YOU WANT TO STAY FREE! QUICK! UP HERE.

UNLESS WE DEVISE A SCHEME TO STOP IT, THE RESULTS COULD DEVASTATE NOT ONLY THE SOLAR SYSTEM BUT HALF THE GALAXY.

MEANWHILE, PROJECT LEADER STEINER, ANGRILY LISTENS TO THE SECURITY CHIEF'S REPORT...



THEY'VE DISAPPEARED INTO THIN AIR, SIR. BUT THEY CANNOT ESCAPE BEYOND THE DEFENCE SYSTEM.

I WANT THEM FOUND, CAPTAIN! TWO MORE DAYS AND THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO CAUSE US ANY MORE TROUBLE.

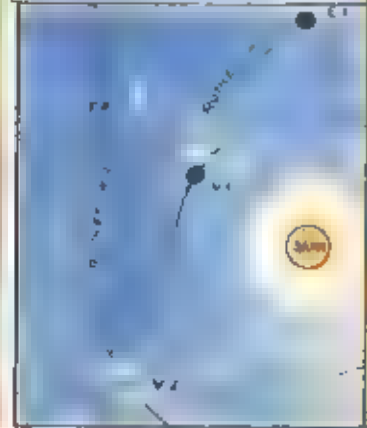


AFTER WHAT SEEMS AN ETERNITY... THE TWO FUGITIVES SCRAMBLE FROM THE ARDUOUS DUCT INTO THE BLACKNESS OF A CAVE.

WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT HERE. IT'S A NETWORK OF CAVES THAT USED TO BE AN ABORIGINAL SACRED PLACE.

HOW INTERESTING HOWEVER, THE LESSON ON ANTHROPOLOGY CAN WAIT. WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON AROUND HERE?

AFTER BRIEF INTRODUCTION MURRAY STEVENS TELLS OF HIS UNSUCCESSFUL SABOTAGE ATTEMPT AND THEN GOES ON TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE PRINCIPLES OF PROJECT GEMINI ARE.



STEINER'S PLAN
The object of the Gemini Plan is to bring Venus into earth's solar orbit thus allowing her rich mineral resources to be economically available. The orbital change requires two manoeuvres. At V1 a fusion explosion diverts Venus onto a receding elliptical trajectory. At V2 a second explosion circularises the orbit to match that of the earth. The final position relative to earth depends on the transit time of the rockets. The resulting upset of the solar system's centre of mass could produce serious consequences.



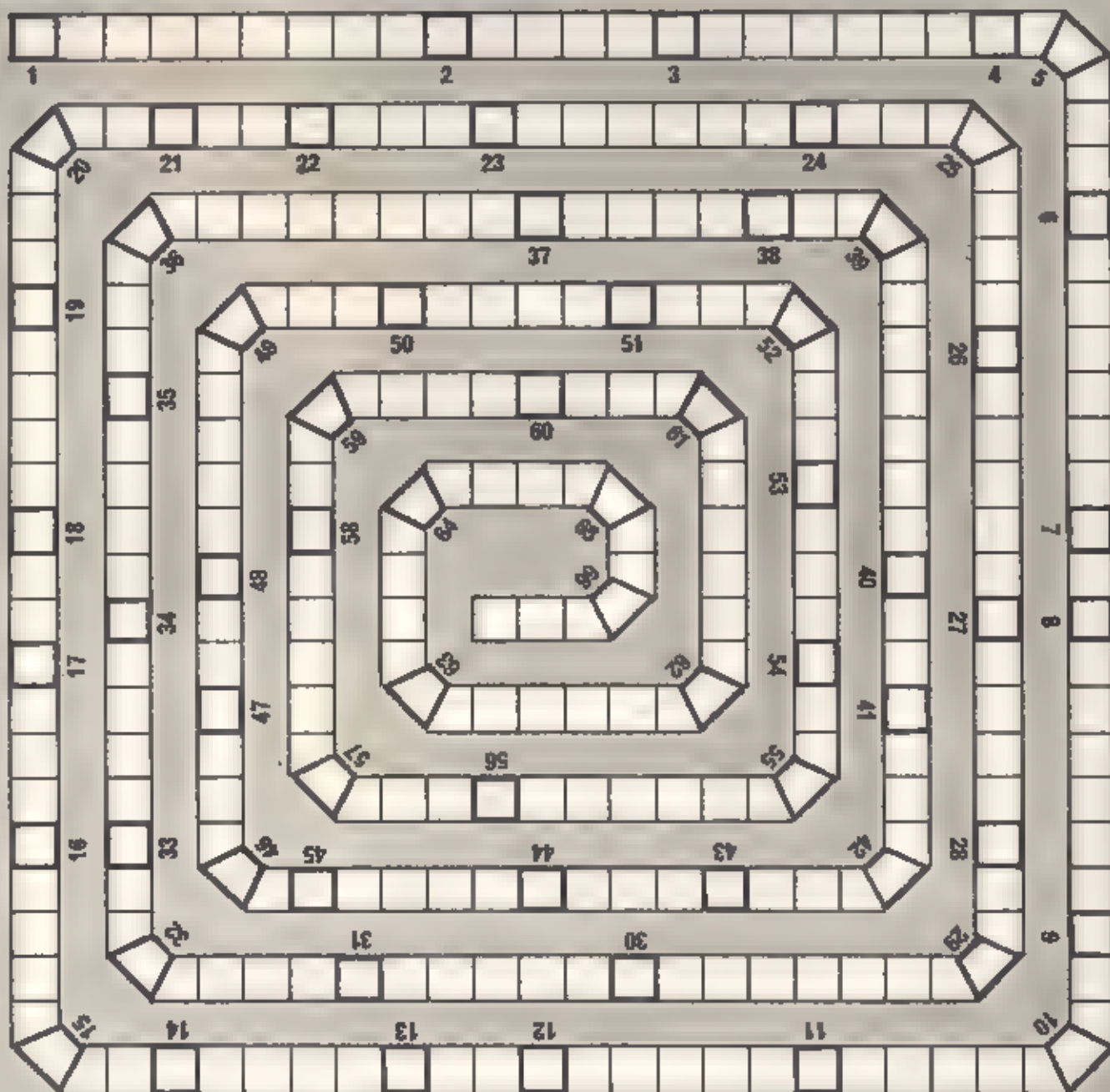
STEINER PERSUADED A CONSORTIUM OF INDUSTRIALISTS TO BACK HIM. HOW DID YOU FIT INTO THIS, ARE YOU A GOVERNMENT MAN?

NO, MURRAY LET'S JUST SAY I'M AN INTERESTED PARTY WHO CAN CONFIRM YOUR CALCULATIONS AS CORRECT. THE ENTERPRISE IS PLANETARILY SIGNIFICANT.



LINK THE WORDS

By solving the first clue, you will see that the final letter falls in a heavy box that must be filled by the first letter of the solution to the second clue, and so on until the chain is completed or you are hopelessly confused.

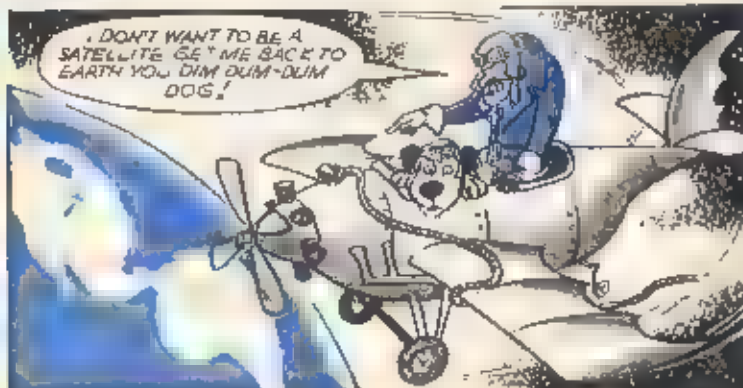
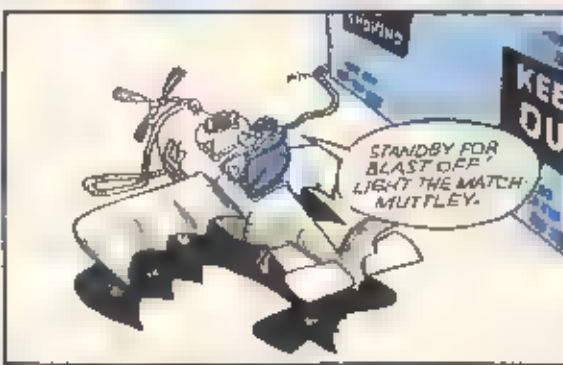
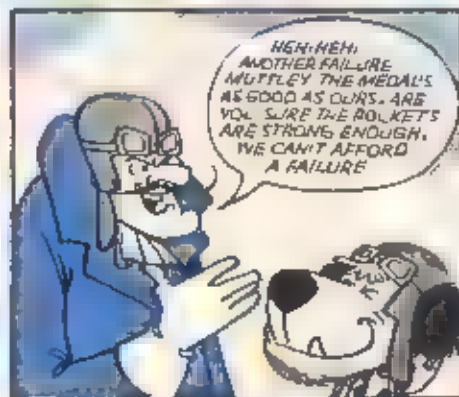
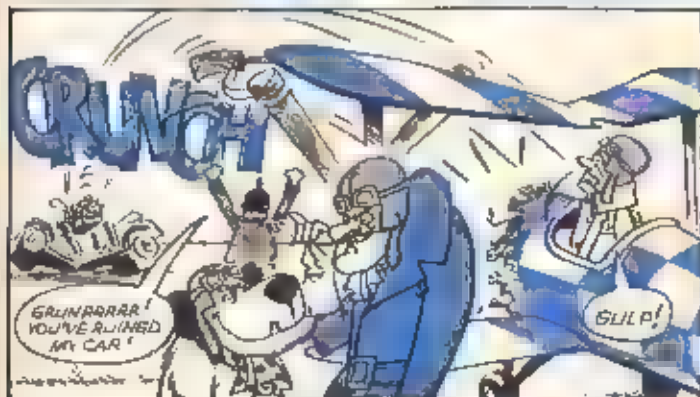
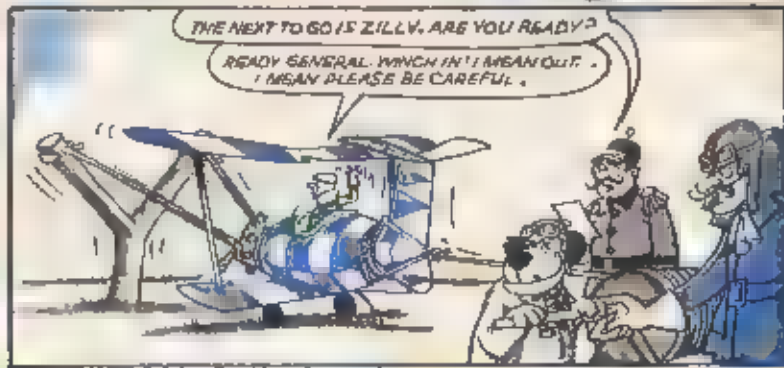


- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Invented by John Logie Baird | 18. Bird of prey | 33. He teaches you | 52. What an active volcano |
| 2. Cloud of dust and gas in space | 17. The reverse of good | 34. Half the diameter. | 53. Eagle's claw |
| 3. You'll find them at an airport | 16. The Capital of England | 35. One of the senses | 54. 12.00 hours |
| 4. A score in Rugby | 15. At no time | 36. Old-fashioned steam train | 55. Main component of air |
| 5. Sailing craft | 20. A chess piece for bird | 37. Power unit | 56. Keep this to be brave |
| 6. Three-sided geometric figure | 21. Another chess piece | 38. Opposite to West | 57. What is a common word? |
| 7. Easter present | 22. He appears in Capt. Scarlet | 39. To carry | 58. Saturn has many .. (sing.) |
| 8. A Knight's mailed glove | 23. The fifth is Guy Fawkes | 40. When snow melts | 59. We walk on it |
| 9. A bus that runs on rails | 24. Family 25 might belong to | 41. Personal clock | 60. A play |
| 10. The most of anything | 25. Apollo 11 had a successful | 42. Blood pump | 61. The belt between the major and minor planets |
| 11. The opposite of clue 10 | 26. Where earth and sky meet | 43. Astronauts have to be ... | 62. Christmas |
| 12. The red planet | 27. Metal used for making coins | 44. Gas used for airships | 63. What is a common word? |
| 13. Another member of the Solar System | 28. We have two | 45. Not woman | 64. Say it again |
| 14. Loch ... ? A monster? | 29. Telstar is | 46. Arctic pole | 65. Result of Moon's pull on ocean |
| 15. Opposite of hard | 30. When the moon blocks out the sun | 47. What predators do | 66. How you found this link word |
| | 31. Make this to get anywhere | 48. No escape | |
| | 32. Eleven or Fifteen | 49. Daily record | |
| | | 50. Cowardly | |
| | | 51. Large marine mammal | |

ANSWERS: 1. Television 2. Nebula 3. Aircraft 4. Fry 5. Vacht 6. Triangle 7. Egg 8. Gauntlet 9. Train 10. Maximum 11. Minimum 12. Mars 13. Saturn 14. Ness 15. Simple 16. Eagle 17. Evil 18. London 19. Never 20. Rook 21. King 22. Green 23. November 24. Launch 25. Royal 26. Launch 27. Transport 28. East 29. Engine 30. Locomotive 31. Small 32. Radial 33. Master 34. Radial 35. Small 36. Locomotive 37. Engine 38. East 39. Transport 40. Launch 41. Royal 42. Launch 43. Transport 44. Engine 45. Small 46. Locomotive 47. Engine 48. East 49. Transport 50. Launch 51. Royal 52. Launch 53. Transport 54. Engine 55. Small 56. Locomotive 57. Engine 58. East 59. Transport 60. Launch 61. Royal 62. Launch 63. Transport 64. Engine 65. Small 66. Locomotive

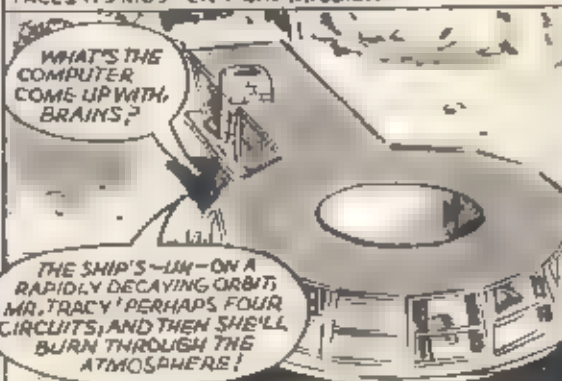


DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY



THUNDERBIRDS

WITH ALAN TRACY LYING UNCONSCIOUS AND EXPOSED TO RADIATION HAZARD WITHIN THUNDERBIRD THREE, AND THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUND-CONTROL EQUIPMENT AT TRACY ISLAND OUT OF ACTION, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE FACES ITS MOST CRITICAL MISSION!



WHAT'S THE COMPUTER COME UP WITH, BRAINS?

THE SHIP'S—UH—ON A RAPIDLY DECAYING ORBIT, MR. TRACY! PERHAPS FOUR CIRCUITS, AND THEN SHE'LL BURN THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE!



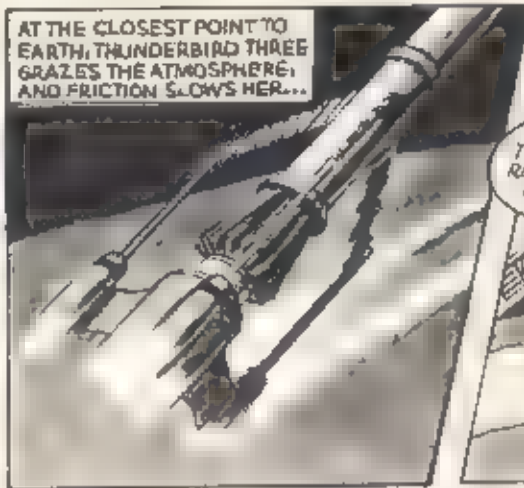
IF WE CAN'T BRING HER UNDER CONTROL IN TIME, THERE'S NO TELLING WHERE SHE'LL CRASH! PERHAPS IN THE SEA... PERHAPS ON A CITY!

ON THE ORBITAL SATELLITE THUNDERBIRD FIVE, JOHN TRACY KEEPS INCESSANT WATCH ON THE RUNAWAY



SHE'S ABOUT TO COMPLETE FIRST ORBIT, FATHER!

AT THE CLOSEST POINT TO EARTH, THUNDERBIRD THREE GRAZES THE ATMOSPHERE, AND FRICTION SLOWS HER...



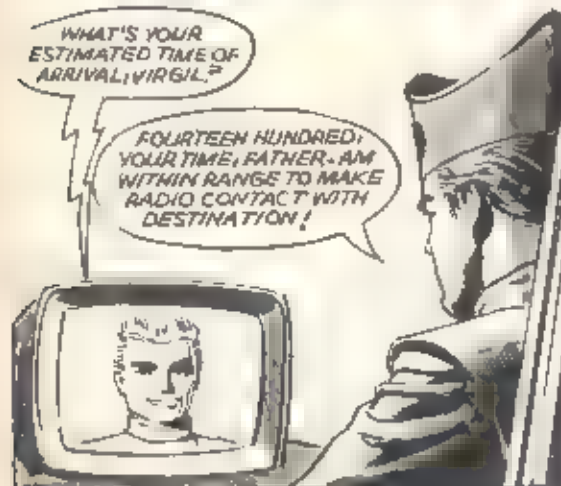
MEANWHILE, HURTLING ACROSS THE SKIES ABOVE THE PACIFIC...



THUNDERBIRD TWO TO INTERNATIONAL RESCUE! TRAVERSING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA, FATHER!

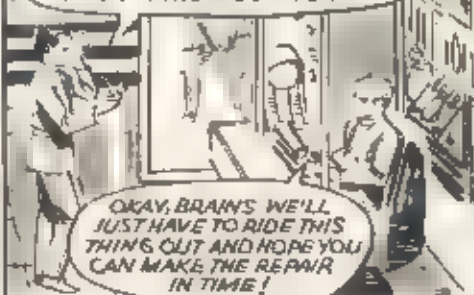
WHAT'S YOUR ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL, VIRGIL?

FOURTEEN HUNDRED, YOUR TIME, FATHER. AM WITHIN RANGE TO MAKE RADIO CONTACT WITH DESTINATION!



VIRGIL IS RACING TO A SECRET FACTORY ON THE SOUTH EAST COAST OF AFRICA, WHERE ELECTRONIC SPARES ARE MANUFACTURED FOR INTERNATIONAL RESCUE...

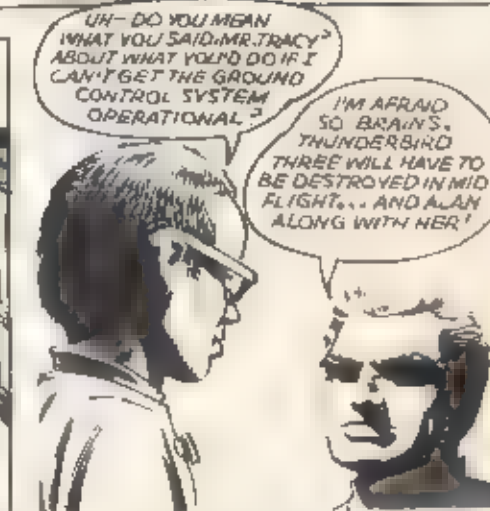
I CAN'T DO ANY MORE UNTIL VIRGIL GETS BACK WITH THE WAVEGUIDE, MR. TRACY. I'VE LEFT SCOTT AND TINTIN ON WATCH IN THE LABORATORY.



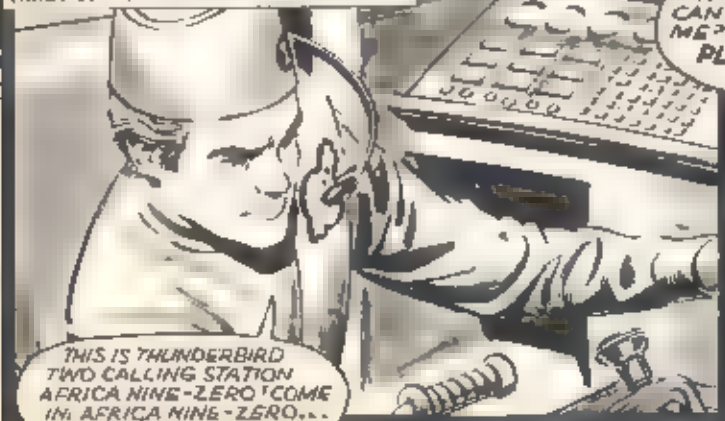
OKAY, BRAINS. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO RIDE THIS THING OUT AND HOPE YOU CAN MAKE THE REPAIR IN TIME!

UH—DO YOU MEAN WHAT YOU SAID, MR. TRACY? ABOUT WHAT YOU'D DO IF I CAN'T GET THE GROUND CONTROL SYSTEM OPERATIONAL?

I'M AFRAID SO, BRAINS. THUNDERBIRD THREE WILL HAVE TO BE DESTROYED IN MID FLIGHT... AND ALAN ALONG WITH HER!



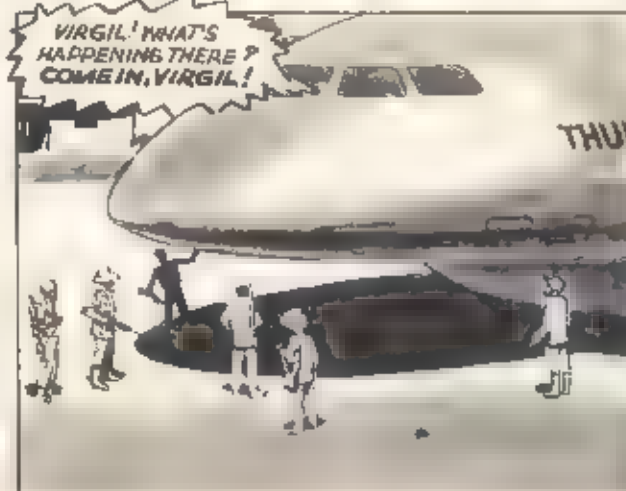
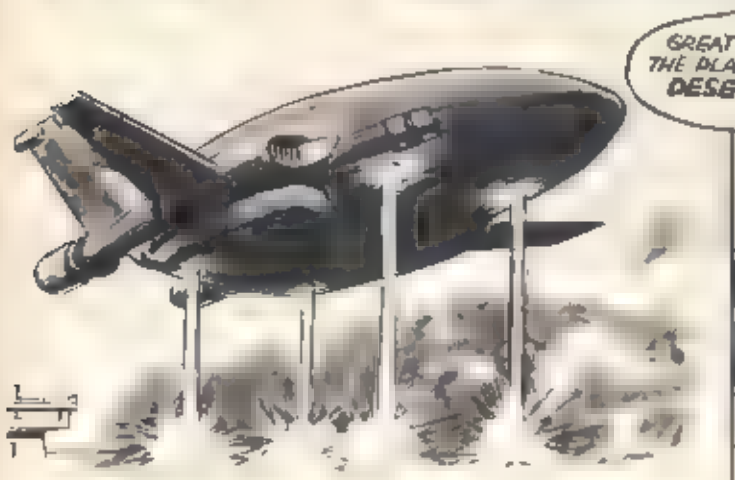
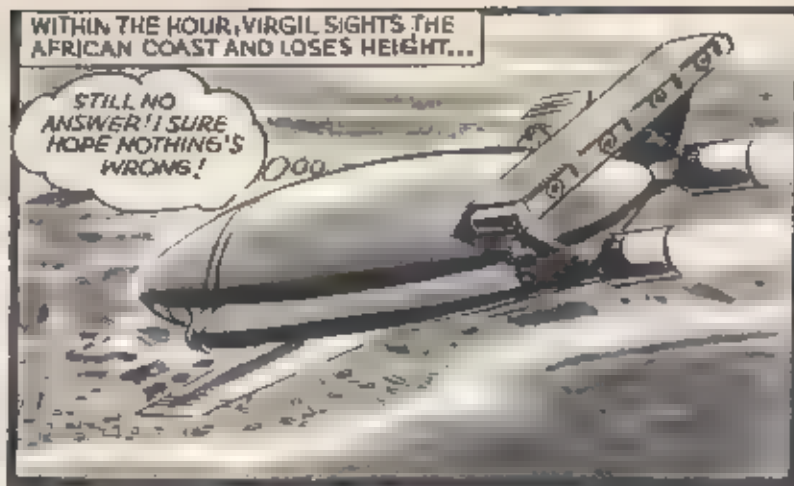
TENSION MOUNTS IN THE RACE AGAINST TIME... WITH VIRGIL THE ONLY HOPE!



THIS IS THUNDERBIRD TWO CALLING STATION AFRICA NINE-ZERO! COME IN, AFRICA NINE-ZERO...

AFRICA NINE-ZERO! CAN YOU HEAR ME? COME IN, PLEASE!



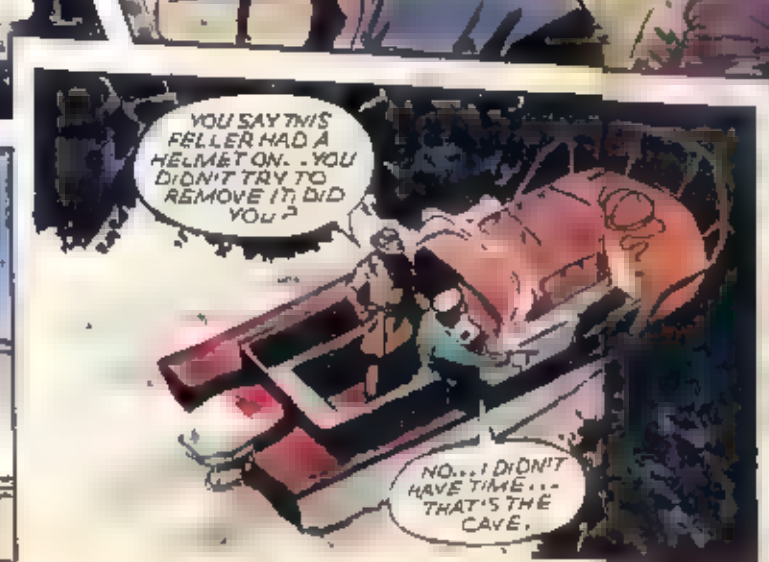
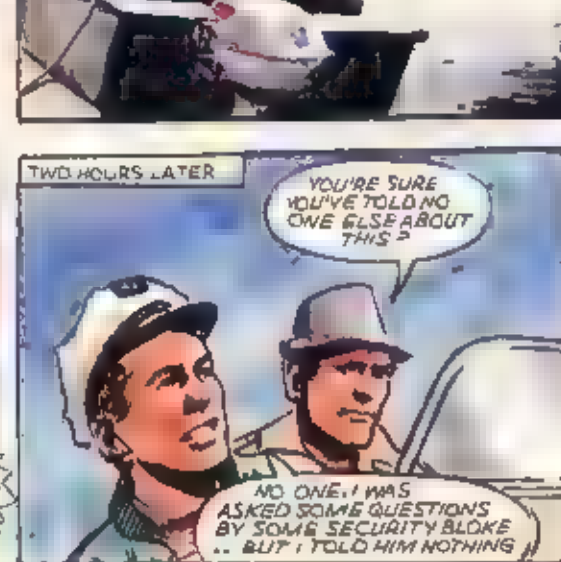
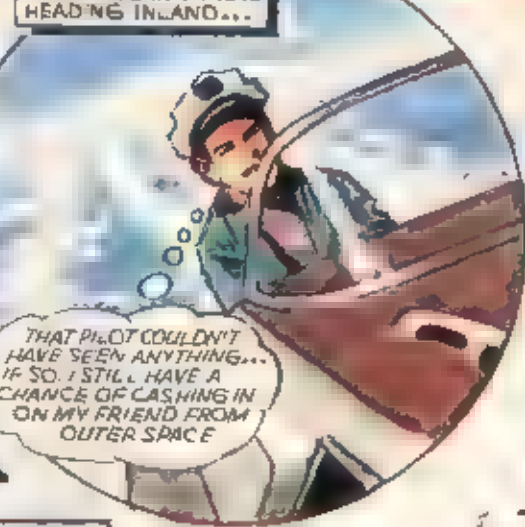
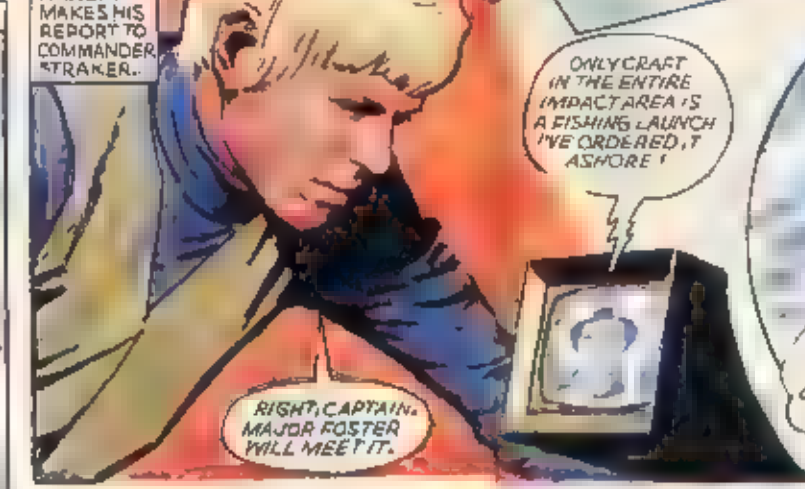
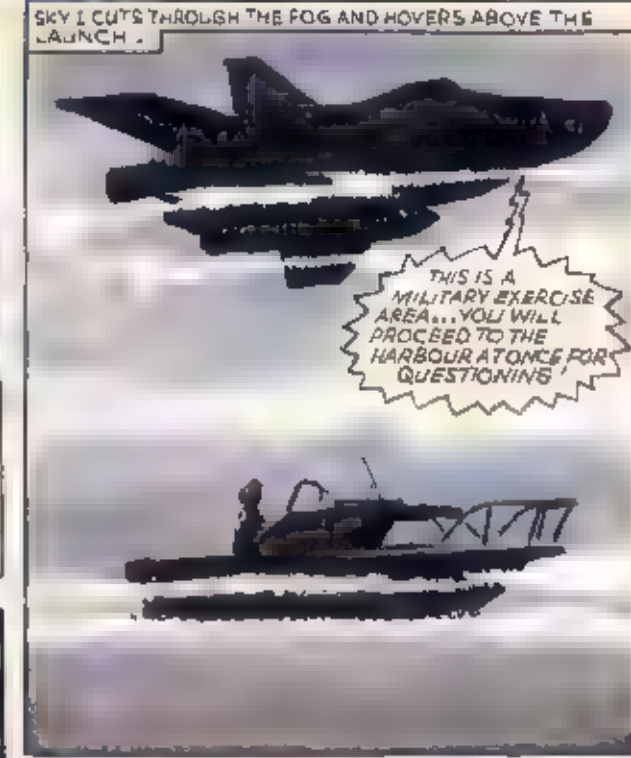
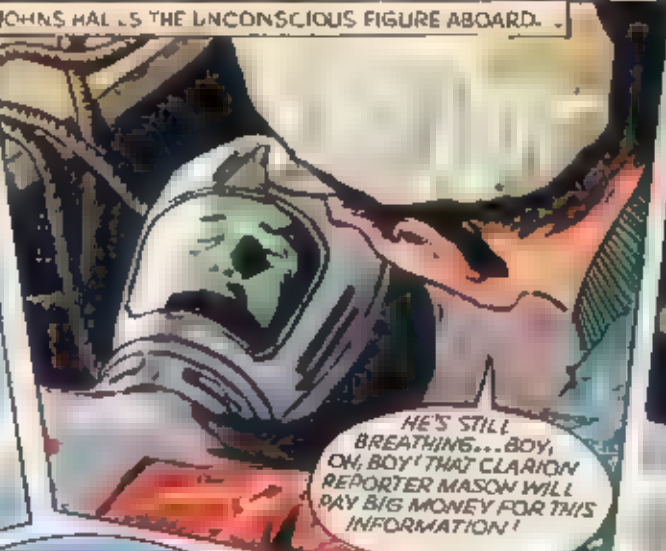




ART: GERRY HAYLOCK

THE CLARION NEWSPAPER HAS PUBLISHED A STORY REVEALING SOME OF THE SECRETS OF SHADO AND ITS FIGHT AGAINST THE ALIENS FROM OUTER SPACE. COMMANDER GO STRAKER REALISES THAT SOMEWHERE WITHIN HIS ORGANISATION IS AN INFORMER. BUT THEN, A RED ALERT COMMENCES, LEADING TO A UFO BEING SHOT DOWN BY PETER KARLIN IN SKY 1. THE ALIEN CRAFT CRASHES IN DENSE FOG, CLOSE TO WHERE ROBIN JOHNS, A YOUNG DRAUGHTSMAN IS FISHING...

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THINK TANK!

Q I was star gazing last night and saw a rapidly moving light cross the southern sky. I think it was an earth satellite but how can I find out?

Christopher Baker
Southend-on-sea, Essex

A Check the published satellite predictions. The following newspapers carry the times when certain satellites are visible: Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph and The Guardian (look on the page with the weather forecast).

Q WOULD AN EYE IN THE SKY?
Ian Macdonald
Edinburgh

A I think you're assuming that Unidentified Flying Objects are spacecraft from other planets but this still remains to be proved (and there are serious people in the scientific and military who are trying to do just that). I'll throw this question right back at you—it may provoke some lively discussion with your friends: *Are UFO's* are alien craft, coming from

Each week on this page I'll print letters, news items, puzzles, and pictures. Write in with your questions on any subject, scientific or mechanical—I'll try to answer the best ones and will pay £1 for each letter printed.

Robin Hilborn, Assistant Editor

outside the Solar System (since the odds are against any of our neighbouring planets being inhabited), what would be the reasons of a highly advanced civilisation crossing dozens of light years (at least) to make prolonged, close-range observations of this rather small planet, Earth? Or are they so far advanced that their "reasons" would make no sense to lowly humans?

Q What does Soyuz mean?
Jack Fox
Hexley Heath, Kent

A It's Russian for "union". The Soyuz spacecraft are designed to join together while in orbit. Other Russian names: Vostok means "east", Voskhod is "sunrise", Luna means "moon" and Lunokhod means "moon vehicle."

UFO-SPOTTERS:

Here's your chance to play a part in the study of unidentified flying objects.

Start a Skywatchers Club with your friends—when you make a sighting of an unknown aerial object, prepare a sighting report with the following details: name, address and location of the observer (nearest town, etc.), what the object looked like (colour and shape) with a sketch if possible, direction it was moving, time and date of the observation, weather conditions, and names and addresses of other witnesses (if you know them). Post your report to *Flying Saucer Review*, 81 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London WC2.

Hippos in the Thames

IF you plan to travel back in time in the near future, you'd be advised to equip yourself with solar glasses—and here's why.

A visitor to the Pliocene period (11 million years ago to 1 million years ago) would find the climate much like today. The British Isles were joined to the Continent and elephants roamed as far north as Suffolk and Norfolk.

The last million years (the Pleistocene Period) have experienced extreme climatic changes. There varied from the Ages in which glaciers covered enormous land areas, to warmer Interglacial Periods.

In one Ice period, Arctic ice and hindered reached southern England; in warmer periods, many ranged across the Yorkshire countryside and hippopotamuses swam in the Thames.



LETTERS TO:
Think Tank, Countdown
Polystyle Publications
382-386 Edgware Road
London W2

NASA'S SPACE PLANS

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced the following launch dates for its 1971 space missions:

March: Isis B, a joint US-Canadian mission to study the ionosphere.

March: experimental mission to test methods of discovering undetected atmospheres around distant planets.

April: OSO-H, the second Orbiting Solar Observatory.

April: a co-project with Germany to study the lower ionosphere with barium aerosols launched by small rockets.

May: two Mariner probes to Mars, launched eight days apart; six months later, the first attempt to orbit another planet—the Mars orbiter will photograph it over each of Mars from a 1000-mile orbit.

May: SSS-A, Small Scientific Satellite to be launched by ferry from the Van Horn platform on the Atlantic coast.

June: Apollo 14 (UK 4), fourth US-UK satellite to study the ionosphere.

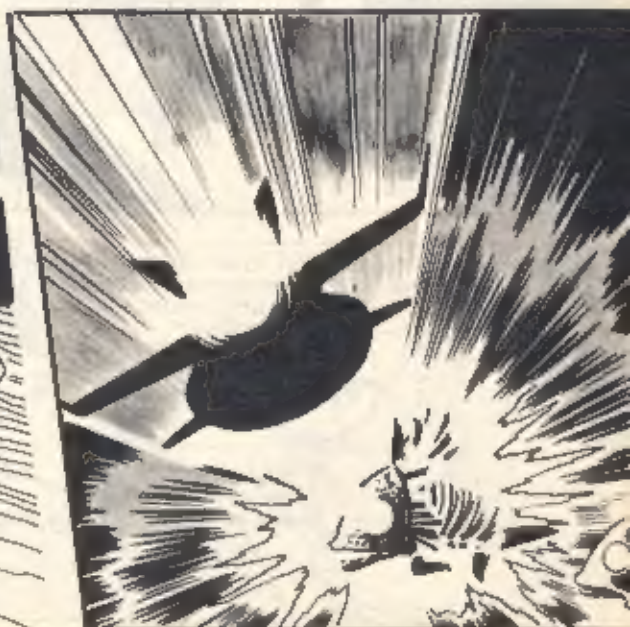
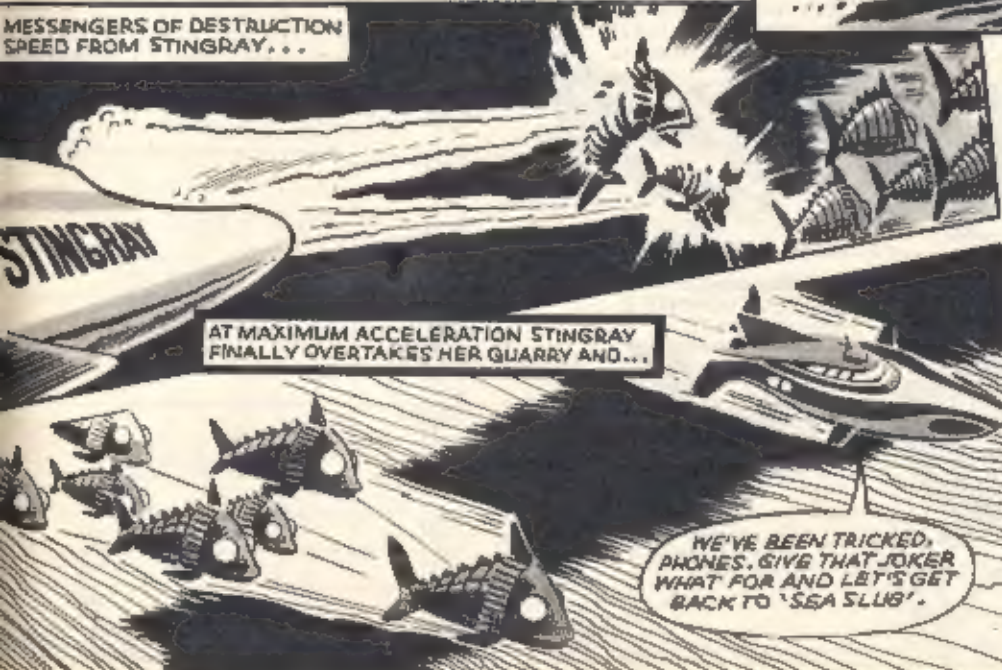
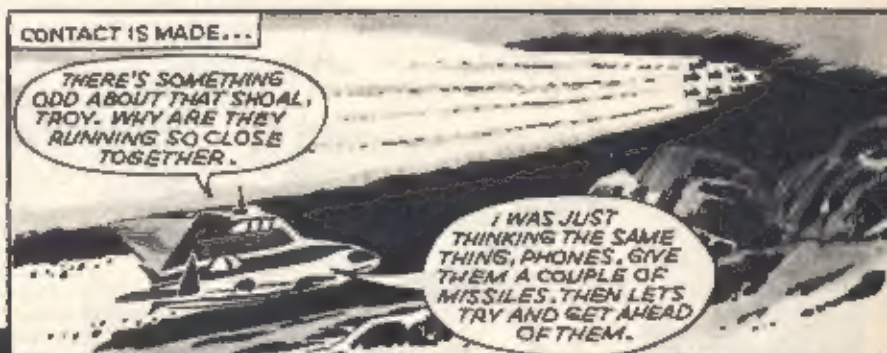
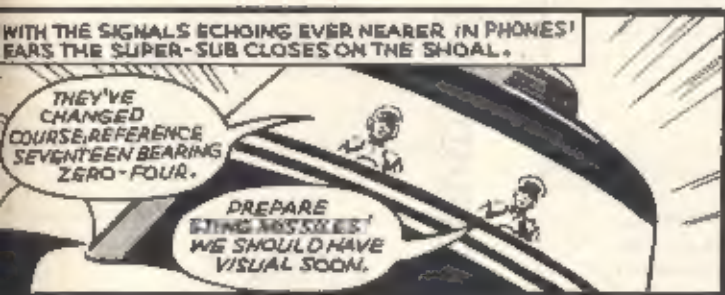
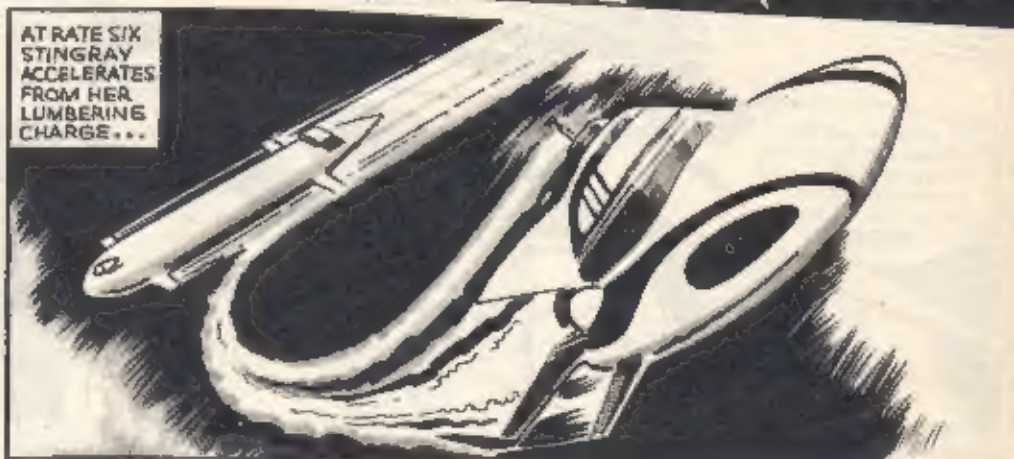
July: Apollo 15 (UK 5), Scott, Walker, Irwin with large lunar roving vehicle for exploring the Hadley-Apennine area.

July-September: Intelsat III, second generation communications satellite in the Intelsat I network.

October: Dawn, the first US satellite to study the Earth's atmosphere.

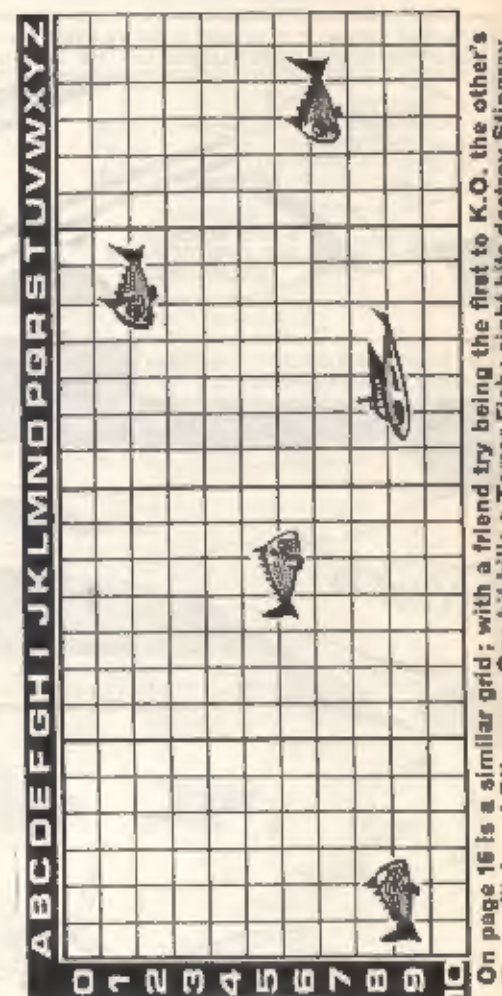
late 1971: B&O 3, third Orbiting Geomagnetic Observatory with 18-inch reflecting telescope.

late 1971: CAS, US-RAN, a sensitive X-ray gamma-ray satellite, scheduled for test satellite.





SEEK and DESTROY!





SURFACE BUILDINGS DISAPPEAR AS THE MISSILES ARE PREPARED.

A MINUTE BEFORE THE BOMBARDMENT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN COMMANDER SHORE STUDIES THE OCEAN MAP...



AND...

WE CAN'T CONTACT STINGRAY, FATHER. SHE MUST BE DEEP DOWN THAT TRENCH. THE LATEST SEISMOGRAPH REPORT SAYS A TREMOR IS IMMINENT.

I'LL GIVE THAT SUB AN EXTRA FIVE MINUTES THEN THE BOMBARDMENT COMMENCES...

LONG MINUTES TICK BY. FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO...

WHAT IN THUNDER DOES HE THINK HE'S PLAYING AT? I'LL HAVE HIM COURT-MARTIALED FOR THIS!

JUST A MINUTE REMAINS WHEN STINGRAY EMERGES FROM THE BLACK CAVERNOUS DEPTHS...



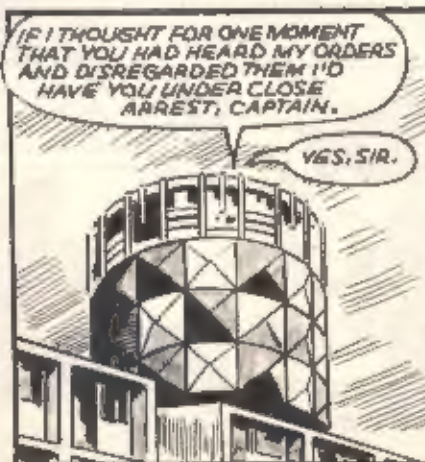
TROY TEMPEST REPORTS...

CANCEL IT, COMMANDER. I'LL MAKE MY FULL REPORT ON RETURN TO BASE.



LATER THE SAME DAY...

MUST'VE BEEN A SHEER FLUKE, SIR. TITAN HIT THE 'SEA SLUG' AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TRENCH WHICH MEANT SHE SANK OOZING HER CARGO FROM END TO END.



IF I THOUGHT FOR ONE MOMENT THAT YOU HAD HEARD MY ORDERS AND DISREGARDED THEM I'D HAVE YOU UNDER CLOSE ARREST, CAPTAIN.

YES, SIR.



FIFTEEN TERROR FISH DESTROYED, THAT'S PRETTY GOOD SHOOTING.



DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY

